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Noted By D/RR

M-450

26 April 1967

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Soviet Strategic Weapons Programs

PARTICIPANTS: a. Ivan Selin, Director for Strategic Programs,
ASD (Systems Analysis) DoD

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1. I visited Ivan Selin for several hours on 20 April, at his request. Selin was interested in exploring whether we could cost out a Soviet threat which Systems Analysis uses as its high-side-worst-case "to scarce ourselves" threat. It consists of several strategic systems projected at higher levels than in the high side of NIPP-67, and involves some systems which are not in the NIPP at all (for example, a Soviet Sprint). The draft Presidential Memos are now being initiated for the FY 69 presentation, and Selin's desire is to see whether there are any particular cost-expenditure aspects relating to the greater-than-NIE-NIPP threat which would be worth talking about.

2. I agreed that we would explore this as part of our own analysis of Soviet options, and indicated that it would be useful, in any case, to know something of the cost implications of his particular threat case. The first cut could be handled informally, and if the results appeared to be significant, Selin will arrange for a formal request. He indicated that he would like to have Keith Marvin handle the liaison and staffing from the OSD/SA end. When the costing has been roughed out we will get together again to look at the results and then decide what variations or alterations should be made, if any, and decide what degree of formality and coordination seems appropriate.

3. We discussed a variety of topics and included below are some of the comments which may be of general interest:

a. It was hard for him to understand why the Soviets are continuing the SS-9 program at the rate they have been. Even with a relatively advanced MIRV Selin believes the SS-9 is a very ineffective weapon from the Soviet point of view, particularly because of its relative expensiveness. Poseidon will

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effectively neutralize the SS-9, on a one-for-one basis, he believes. I pointed out that the SS-9 is a vintage 1962 system, not 1972. In 1962 and up to now it probably has seemed useful to the Soviets. It's the only ICBM they have which even potentially can be used against ours. How long its deployment will be continued is hard to predict.

b. The SS-11 program has made much more sense, Selin thinks, and he concludes that if the Soviets are beginning to phase this program down (level it off) it's about the right time and at the right level. He concludes that continued expansion of the Soviet ICBM force in fixed sites, even though hardened and dispersed, is not going to turn out to be very effective for the cost. He thinks the only smart Soviet move is to go to mobile systems. Even with mobile systems, however, the US will retain a very commanding position because of its advance MIRV technology for Minuteman and its current plans for the Poseidon.

c. In many respects the SLBM threat from the G and H class submarines is more worrisome to him than larger classes such as are now presumably emerging. The reason is that a short range ballistic missile virtually precludes warning soon enough after launch to enable a successful defense. Detection of the submarine is possible but this still makes for a difficult defense. Larger submarines with longer range missiles, although firing from difficult directions (from the US point of view), fly high and long enough to still allow defensive warning. In general, he finds the Soviet missile submarine program difficult to understand with respect to rationale, trends, etc. We discussed these in some detail. He has several unanswered questions about the warhead which might go with these cruise missiles.

4. Selin continues to be puzzled over the Tallinn system. In his view the system has too much capability on the radar end particularly, to be just a long range SAM system as we have been postulating. He thinks the LRSAM role could be carried out nicely with a system having lesser radar capabilities. We talked about the threat as it presumably appeared to the Soviets during the period that the Tallinn system was being developed and initially deployed. He accepts that there are high flying aircraft systems against which the Tallinn complexes may have been designed, but does not understand why the Soviets have not attempted to deploy extensive low altitude SAM systems, since most US planning for some years has stressed low altitude penetration as the major tactic. Given the ambiguities about Tallinn, he did not think it mattered a great deal whether it actually has ABM capabilities now or potentially in the future, because it will have to be considered in ABM terms

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in US planning. Its worrisome aspects, of course, is that if it has significant capabilities it could destabilize the relationship between US and Soviet Strategic and Offensive capabilities and offensive forces. The Tallinn System would have to be treated in any arms freeze as a ABM system, regardless of what it really is.

5. Selin has only a passing interest in the arms freeze-moratorium question, although I read and we discussed a memorandum which he had prepared on the topic. The thrust of his memorandum was that the US has a commanding strategic lead at the present time, and that the US must maintain its ability to reach the 1970's goals now set for MIRV and Poseidon. As long as the US could continue RDT&E in all fields and be allowed to introduce MIRV and Poseidon, there is virtually nothing lost to the US with respect to current arms moratorium planning. In general, he thought the arms freeze/moratorium discussions, in a serious negotiating framework, were a long way off. The Secretary of Defense had no interest in giving up US capabilities at this stage without very substantial tradeoffs. Selin indicated that a "fair trade" might be something like the US agreeing to withhold production and deployment of the Poseidon if the USSR would dismantle its Tallinn type sites and the Moscow ABM system.

6. We discussed long range intelligence projections. He indicated that the NIPP was a useful and virtually indispensable issuance for Systems Analysis. This is not because the NIPP necessarily has the best set of numbers in it, but because the NIPP is a coordinated, authoritative, agreed document. It has the degree of detail which makes the NIPP usable as a ready reference to virtually any question asked. However, he quite critical of some of the projections such as the aircraft fighter numbers and characteristics as projected in the present NIPP. He thought the number of advanced all-weather interceptors along the lines of the YF-12 was quite unrealistic, especially the avionics and advanced technology implied. He described the way in which a fighter of this kind should operate, and questioned whether the USSR could use as large a number as that projected. (This is being checked into.)

7. The year's military Soviet NIE's were somewhat better focused than last, he thought; NIE 11-8 was quite good; but he wondered whether in part its structure was not simply one in which mirror images of the US are played back. I indicated that US work is useful primarily in showing what the issues are in the first place, and how some of the relevant questions should be framed, but that Soviet programs are examined with these factors in mind and the result is an analysis of Soviet activities in terms

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which make it comparable to the US program with which it should be compared. He thought that NIE 11-3 and NIE 11-8 should be combined, at least from his point of view. These two estimates cover too much of the same ground and use the same logical argumentation. In that sense they duplicate and overlap each other. Their combination into a single document is something which he thought ought to be looked at in the years ahead.

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8. Selin had discussed with General Carroll some of the problems and considerations which need to be taken into account in evaluating [] study of Long Range Threat Projections. Selin thought Carroll was doubtful as to the utility of setting up an independent DIA effort along the lines suggested by the DIA study group. The DIPTA could not, for example, be thought of as a projection which could in fact, replace agreed intelligence such as the NIPP. It would lack the authoritativeness of the NIPP, which is the latter's main strength.

9. From the Systems Analysis end of the tunnel, there is not these days, much need to be highly current on the various new developments in intelligence with respect to Soviet programs. Selin felt he had a good deal of leisure with respect to many of these and believed that the current US strategic posture was relatively unaffected by smaller shifts. Any major move which the USSR might make in an attempt to shift the balance in a major way would be visible soon enough to redress the balance, he thought.

10. He asked whether DIA had been in touch with the Agency to seek assistance on the several studies which he had asked be done for the current planning cycle. I indicated that we had informal knowledge of the studies but that to my knowledge no effort had been made by DIA to seek CIA assistance in preparing replies. In general he is quite interested in any study or work being done which is aimed at increasing understanding of how the Soviet Union goes about military programming, the institutional factors at play, the various limits and so on that are involved.

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE
		May 1967
TO: D/OPR		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
4-F-18	Hdgrs	
REMARKS:		
<p>This is an internal memo I wrote for the record on my recent chat with Ivan Selin. It is for information and background. I discussed the costing request, paras 1 and 2, with Ed Proctor before seeing Selin, and Ed concurred in handling it as indicated. Because of the mixture of topics covered and some of the comments made, I don't plan additional distribution of this memo. (I did give a copy to [redacted]).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[redacted]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">STATINTL</p>		
FROM: [redacted]		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
3-F-43	Hdgrs	

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FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

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